WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An optical scanner that scans a surface of each of a plurality of latent image carriers with a corresponding light beam, comprising:

a optical deflection unit that is rotatable and that deflects and reflects light beams, the optical deflection unit having two or more surfaces, along an axis of rotation of optical deflection unit, that deflect and reflect the light beams in different directions;

a lens that takes-in the light beams reflected from the optical deflection unit and divides the light beams into number of light beams equal to number of the image carrier; and

a bending optical system corresponding to each image carrier, the bending optical system guides the light beam output from the lens onto a surface of a corresponding one of the image carriers.

2. The optical scanner according to claim 1, wherein the light beams entering into the optical deflection unit include

at least one orthogonal beam that is orthogonal to the axis of rotation of the optical deflection unit, and

at least one oblique beam that is oblique to a plane that is orthogonal to the axis of rotation of the optical deflection unit.

3. The optical scanner according to claim 2, wherein the oblique beam satisfies the condition

$10 < 2L \cdot \tan\theta + d < 40$ (millimeters),

where θ is angle of incidence of the light beam with respect to the plane

that is orthogonal to the axis of rotation of the optical deflection unit, d is distance between incident positions of the light beams, and L is a distance between the surfaces of the optical deflection unit and an image surface.

4. The optical scanner according to claim 1, wherein

the lens is a multi-tier lens obtained by stacking a plurality of lenses in a direction parallel to the axis of rotation of the optical deflection unit.

5. The optical scanner according to claim 1, wherein a bending optical system that is nearest to the lens includes a mirror that takes-in all the light beams output from the lens, reflects a light beam corresponding to the bending optical system that is nearest to the lens, and that is transparent to remaining light beams.

6. The optical scanner according to claim 1, wherein each bending optical system includes a mirror that takes-in light beams output from the lens for the bending optical systems that are at a later stage, reflects a light beam corresponding to the bending optical system in question, and that is transparent to light beams for the bending optical systems that are at the later stage.

7. The optical scanner according to claim 1, wherein each bending optical system includes a lens that is mounted so as to be eccentric by shifting or tilting in a vertical scanning direction.

8. The optical scanner according to claim 1, wherein each bending optical system includes a lens that has at least one eccentric surface tilted in a vertical scanning direction.

9. An image forming apparatus comprising an optical scanner that scans a surface of each of a plurality of latent image carriers with a corresponding light beam, the optical scanner including

a optical deflection unit that is rotatable and deflects and reflects light beams, the optical deflection unit having two or more surfaces, along an axis of rotation of optical deflection unit, that deflect and reflect the light beams in different directions;

a lens that takes-in the light beams reflected from the optical deflection unit and divides the light beams into number of light beams equal to number of the image carrier; and

a bending optical system corresponding to each image carrier, the bending optical system that guides the light beam output from the lens onto a surface of a corresponding one of the image carriers.

10. The image formation apparatus according to claim 9, wherein

three latent image carriers are provided corresponding to magenta, cyan, and yellow.

11. The image formation apparatus according to claim 9, wherein four latent image carriers are provided corresponding to magenta, cyan, yellow, and black.